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THE THOROUGHBRED

By Henry Kitchell Webster

Here Is the Answer to the Question That Every Man Asks Himself, an Answer That All Women Wonder About

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Celia heard his latch-key she sang out from her room, the open door of which was at the head of the stairs:

"You'll have to fly, Fred. It's a quarter to seven and they're coming at half past."

A minute later, realizing that he had not answered, that there had indeed been no sound at all since the click of the closing door, she called:

"It's you, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's me," she heard him say. And then came the swish of his evening papers and the clatter of the big buttons on his overcoat as he dumped it carelessly on the oak settle at the foot of the stairs.

But there was another silence after that. Whatever was he doing down there? She even arrested the movement of her lamb's wool so that she could listen better. Then, with a frown (not an ill-tempered frown; a rueful one of exasperated patience, which one saw pretty often in her face when she was talking to or about her husband) she started toward the door to investigate. But before she had taken more than a step or two in that direction she heard him lumbering up and went back to her dressing table.

The glimpse of the doorway that she got in her mirror showed her that he had stopped there, but even without that, she could have felt him looking at her. So, without turning, she greeted him with a good-humored "Hello," and added: "You heard what I said, didn't you? It's nearly seven and they're coming at half past."

"Are there people coming to dinner? All right."

His voice was stiff with preoccupation—hardly articulate. He might have been talking in his sleep.

She shot a glance at him over her shoulder. "You don't mean to say you'd forgotten all about the dinner, Fred!"

In that same level voice, with neither surprise nor contrition in it, he admitted that he had. "But it's all right," he repeated. "There's plenty of time."

"Not if you want to shave in the guests' bathroom," she warned him. "You'll have to be out of there with all your lathery things and clear up after yourself, before a quarter past, because the Colliers are driving out from town and they may be a little early. And I can't spare Marie to pick up after you, because I'm going to use her myself."

He said "All right" again, in that same dull, half-conscious sort of way, so that she whipped round upon him energetically.

"For heaven's sake, Fred, wake up and be human! Go downstairs and get yourself a drink. That sleep-walking way of yours is growing on you and you've no idea how maddening it is!" She made as if to turn back to her dressing table, but faltered. "Nothing's—happened, I suppose," she said.

He said, "No; it's all right. I'll buck up and enjoy your party." Instead of going out of the room, he came into it; came up close behind her and took her bare arms in his hands. "There's time enough to give a chap a kiss, isn't there?"

But as he came up close and took hold of her she leaned a little forward for a closer inspection of her face in the mirror, and answered his request with the remark:

"You rode out in the smoker tonight, didn't you? What unspeakable sort of things do they smoke in places like that?"

His arms fell at his sides and he stepped back. Indeed the impact of a good muscular push would have been no more effective of her purpose. She added in a tone of fretful apology, "There isn't time to fool, Fred, really. It's 7 o'clock. Do run along."

She knew quite well that it was not because he smelled smoky, nor because there wasn't time for the embrace he wanted, that she had turned him out like that. If she'd been more indifferent and less in love with him, she wouldn't have minded.

It was a very old instinct in her, as old as anything about herself that she could remember—as old as the first starched frock of her childhood, to hate being rumpled. She knew that. But she did not at all realize the first-class importance of it. Her whole development during more than a score of years had been profoundly modified by it. It would be interesting to speculate whether the instinct worked from within out, or from without in.

Like most radical instincts, it seldom obtruded on her consciousness. She'd have denied, quite sincerely, that it had anything to do with the major decisions of her life; with, to take the supreme case, her marriage to Alfred Blair. But it did have a lot to do with it. It also explained the slight sensation of surprise that ran around the circle of friends when her engagement to him was announced.

He was perfectly eligible, of course. Only not just the man they'd have expected Celia French, with her exaggerated fastidiousness, to select.

Alfred Blair was a man of whom every one spoke well. But, in speaking well of him, they were likely to use rather uninviting adjectives—self made, steady, industrious.

He was steady and industrious, and the adjective self-made was, perhaps, justified by the fact that though he was a licensed architect and a skilful engineer, he was ornamented by no college degrees.

At twenty-five, when his opportunity came, he had the audacity to grasp it; borrowed every cent of his mother's little fortune, and launched himself in a business of his own. At thirty-five, when he and Celia were married, he had ten successful years behind him and the assured sense of power that success brings.

A man of more exuberant manners, on the strength of a record like that, would have been called brilliant. Blair's quiet, steady, unornamental way made the adjective impossible; caused him to be summed up, by casual acquaintances at least, in a set of terms which didn't account for him at all.

The thing that made it all the easier for persons who had mastered a social skill to patronize him, was that he was much too open-minded to despise the things he knew he lacked and too simple to pretend to a mild contempt of them.

But what attraction had he for Celia? The less affectionate of her acquaintances had, of course, an explanation ready to hand. The Frenches had never been so well-to-do as they tried to look. Celia had never had a proper dress allowance and had had to do a lot of contriving even to go through the motions of paying off her social obligations. Here was a decently presentable man with plenty of money. It was as simple as two and two.

Her real friends resented this imputation hotly. When you got to know Alfred Blair you found him singularly attractive. He had such a straight way of looking and speaking and doing things. He had a pleasantly modulated voice. He had, according to one or two enthusiasts, real tact and charm. The question whether she'd have married him had he not been prosperous was a perfectly barren one. Alfred Blair would never have asked her.

Celia was twenty-six when she met him, and had had experience enough with her own amatory emotions to believe she understood them. She had been engaged once and half-engaged another time, to say nothing of an indefinite number of young men—three or four, anyway—who had come up to the point where she had had to take a line with them. She probably would have engaged herself to marry the second man had not her break with the first made her wary.

And then came Alfred Blair, who put the misgivings to flight. The thing he'd given her first was an unfathomable sense of security. All the facts about him fitted in, of course; that he was older, that he was self-disciplined, and, it cannot be denied, that he was prosperous. She tested him, cautiously at first, then with growing confidence. The little privileges she gave him she freely amplified when she found he never tried to amplify them for himself. These restraints never led her to doubt the genuineness of his passion for her. That was plain enough for the blind to see. But the will that reined it in was supreme.

CHAPTER II.

HER engagement and her marriage were wonderful restoratives to her confidence. She felt her attitude toward the two former lovers, which had caused her more doubts and unhappiness than she was willing to admit, triumphantly justified. Her instincts had not been wrong after all. Happiness didn't necessarily hurt nor deface. For a while she was utterly content, and her contentment was spiced by a mild pity for pretty much all the rest of the world, and especially for the girls who had married those two former lovers of hers.

It was from an unexpected quarter that her troubles began creeping up on her—the quiet, irrepressible growth within herself of a passion for her husband. She found the fine silken fabric of their life imperilled by impulses of her own that terrified her. Jealousy was one of these—utterly without foundation in fact, she knew, which made it all the more terrifying.

There was little Nora Brice, for example, somewhere about twenty, whose people had lost all their money, and who, as much from inclination as from necessity, gave dancing lessons. The Blairs and two or three couples of their friends had her in, occasionally, to keep them up to the minute, and she and Alfred had taken an innocently shameless fancy to each other. She laughed at him—treated him like a boy, proved to him, to his intense astonishment, that he could dance as well as anybody, and, under the stimulus of the phonograph, polished off a facet of him that nobody had dreamed existed.

Celia's line, of course, was good-humored amusement, and she would, she felt, have been irretrievably shamed had any one discovered, especially had her husband discovered, the true emotions her manner masked. But she could no more help feeling those sharp stabs of pain than she could have resisted the neuralgic twinges of a bad tooth. Jealousy was not the only feeling, either, that shook and gripped and dismayed her.

So, from whatever motive you like to name it (she tried hard to name it cowardice), she clung to the thing that had once not been a mask—the cool aloofness, the fastidiousness, the kindly affectionate superiority; went on pointing out, with humorous tolerance, his little mistakes; maintained the position which he had once so eagerly acquiesced in and had never tried to change, that her duty toward him was to refine and civilize him; induce him to appreciate the value of the ornamental and frivolous aspects of life; get him suppler—more, as she used to say, human.

There had come within the last few months, and within a year of their marriage, a change in him which made this attitude of hers all the harder to maintain. Something seemed to be undermining that quiet confidence in himself which, when she had first met him, had been his most distinguishing characteristic. She knew, of course, that he had business worries, due to the conditions created by the war. But then, the war had affected everybody. All their friends groaned and joked about their poverty; affected an extravagant ignorance as to where their next meal was coming from. But they all went on living, as far as she could see, in just about the same old way.

There was no reason to suppose that Fred was any harder hit than the others. Indeed, he talked very much less about hard times than the other men did. He had, two or three times lately, looked pretty solemn over bills, to be sure; had asked, with no jocular undertone, how much she'd paid for that rose-colored evening frock, and had made a queer noise like an audible shudder over an off-hand remark of hers about the possibility of trading in their car for a this year's model.

That she had not taken any of these signs more seriously was due to the fact that she supposed all husbands made themselves unpleasant on the subject of domestic expenditure. Her married friends of longer standing seemed to accept this convention quite light heartedly, and burlesqued a lively terror over the effect of all of their more ornamental purchases on their respective husbands. Besides, Celia knew she wasn't extravagant, really. It couldn't be that that plunged her husband into the brooding melancholy that seemed to envelop him whenever circumstances gave it a chance.

But this belief, quite honestly achieved, didn't help her much, because the melancholy was there. Many a time she'd surprised a haggard look, almost a despairing look, in his eyes, that all but brought the tears to her own. And the impulse that came to get her arms around him tight, to demand to be told what the trouble was—all about it clear down to the bottom—would be almost irresistible. But the fear of losing her own self control, going to pieces, crying, making a damp, unpleasant little fool of herself, always restrained her—had up to tonight at any rate. She'd always stiffened against it. In order not to go soft, she'd become brusque—bullied him a little, urged him to cheer up, dragged him off to the theatre or a four of bridge with the Calvins around the corner.

When Marie, the maid, came upstairs to hook up the rose-colored gown, the voice in which Celia questioned her as to the state of preparedness in the dining room sounded remote and small to her own ears, though to Marie herself, so far as one could tell, it sounded natural enough.

She stirred sharply—a movement like anger—when she heard her husband come out of his room and walk steadily down the stairs, without pausing at her now closed door for a word. It was not the omission that made her angry, but the sharp contraction of her own heart that it caused—the lump that it brought in her throat.

(To Be Continued.)

BULLETS AND BILLETS

What Life in the Trenches Means By a Man Who Has Been There

Begin the Story on This Page Monday, Sept. 10

Your Evening Gown for Early Fall Wear

Youthful Charm Is Combined With Dignity in This Gown, Rendering It Suitable for Maid or Matron

By Mildred Lodewick

The Evening World's Fashion Expert.

IDEALLY exemplary of an in-between season frock for evening wear is this one, which neither offends the mode by indifference nor follows it subserviently. The moyen-age style is suggested in effect, though not in cut; the draped effect is recognized, but only half-heartedly, and the straight silhouette takes advantage of the right side of the skirt.

This frock proves its suitability to the season by being a bit more dignified than the airy summer frocks, yet not so rich and elegant as the winter ones.

Soft silk or a soft lustrous satin known as "silvery satin" are the most accommodating fabrics for this design, and, with velvet ribbon, lace and roses, an ensemble of unusual charm is achieved. The lower half of the bodice is of the satin, draped softly about the figure, with a tiny pleating of the same finishing the top edge. Silver run lace banding serves an effective purpose above it, being formed into arm bands, which take the place of sleeves. Shoulder straps of velvet ribbon complete the bodice.

This front view model shows the satin dress fabric, which would be beautiful in turquoise blue, used as a sash drapery low over the hips. At the left side it is held under two large pink roses with green leaves, from which drop two long thin streamers of blue velvet ribbon. The skirt being draped at this point and finished around the loop with pleating lends an added decorative touch.

The back view of my design shows how adaptable is brocade or figured silk. In pale green it would be delightful combined with lavender faille ribbon for the sash drapery, which could be held with pink flowers and rich green leaves. Green chiffon to complete the upper bodice with shoulder straps of opalescent beads, which hold all the various colors of the rainbow, would complete an exceedingly attractive and individual frock. It incorporates the essential qualities of dignity and conservatism for the matron, but in such a delightfully naive way as to make it not inappropriate for the maid.

Answers to Queries.

Dear Fashion Editor:

Will you give me some advice about how to remodel a taffeta dress like sample of blue and green plaid? It is for an afternoon dress. Am eighteen years old, 5 feet 5 inches tall and weigh 135 pounds. I have three lengths of goods which constituted the skirt, and some small pieces from the waist which could be used. Thanking you in advance,

MISS V. VAN C.

Use two lengths for the skirt, with a pleated front panel of blue Georgette. The other length will do for sleeves and under-arm pieces. Front and back of waist of Georgette, round neck, trimmed with design in green beads.

Dear Fashion Editor:

Will you advise me if tucks at the bottom of a skirt will make one appear shorter? Also, will an Empire waistline make one appear taller? Am seventeen years of age, 4 feet 10 inches tall, and want to look as tall as possible. I wear my hair in a high knot on top, which helps some.

MISS E. A. J.

Tucks do tend to shorten one's height. Slightly raising the waistline will help your difficulty; so will lengthening the skirt help. Would advise having your dresses made with a lengthening line from shoulder to hem, the break at the waistline being inconspicuous.

Dear Fashion Editor:

I desire to have a dress which I can wear this fall in the street and this winter under a broadcloth coat. Do you think serge appropriate, or would you advise a heavy satin? I shall be grateful for your advice.

MRS. G. M. D.

Heavy satin would be more suitable for the double service, unless you expect to wear the dress in late fall.

TO MISS R. M.: Veil your dress with either chiffon or Georgette crepe to match the background of the silk. Gray faille ribbon one inch wide would be a pretty trimming on sleeves and belt.

Pauline Furlong's Daily Article on Beauty and Health

Care of the Hair

PAULINE FURLONG

THIS week my column will be devoted to articles on the care of the hair, and I know from my mail that it is an important subject to all women and indeed many men also.

First of all, it is essential to the health of the scalp to keep it cool and dry, and women should cultivate the habit of leaving the hat off as much as possible indoors, and especially when in the open. Heavy, tight hats ruin the hair, because they prevent a free circulation of the blood through the scalp, which is of the greatest importance to the life and condition of the hair. It is a foolish practice to begin wearing heavy, close-fitting hats at this or any warm season of the year, and it is quite bad enough to do so even in cold weather. Lightweight Panamas and lacy, transparent hats are both sensible and certainly becoming headgear for all women, and these keep the scalp and hair cool and aired at all times.

Cleanliness is the next important thing to keep the hair in good condition, and it must be brushed daily to keep it free from dust and dandruff. It must be washed often and given as much thought and time as the face, teeth and nails to keep it smooth, clean and glossy, for certainly nothing is more beautiful than a well cared for head of hair. Few personal attentions bring greater reward for the effort and time allowed for it.

Lifeless condition of the hair also may indicate internal trouble existing—anaemia, poor circulation, under nourished nerves, constipation, &c., and the scalp and hair show the first indications that all is not as it should be with the health.

Answers to Beauty and Health Questions.

SCANT EYEBROWS—ESTHER D.: Red vaseline or lanolin rubbed into the brows with a small tooth brush, each night, will thicken them. No, do not clip them as this makes them coarse.

INGROWING NAILS—MRS. A. C.: Short shoes cause these and you must wear the proper shoes to prevent them after removing them. They are not difficult to remove unless the flesh has become inflamed. In that case see a chiropodist. Place cotton under the corners of the nails with an orange wood stick, after bathing the feet each night. Put a little peroxide of hydrogen on the cotton before placing it under the nails. In a few days the corners will have worked themselves out and can then be cut. Always cut the nails in a "V" at the top.

BLOATING AND GAS AFTER EATING—MRS. F. R.: This condition is easily overcome, but it takes will power to do. Eat less and take a fast. Avoid all heavy foods and drink hot water before meals and during the day; you will feel better soon.

MOLES—EDNA F.: Moles are not inherited and may be removed by the electric needle. No, it is not painful nor expensive.

INDIGESTION—M. B.: Do not exercise until two hours after eating any meal and avoid fried foods, greasy ones and heavy sweets and pastries. Hot water taken before meals will also help you.

"Ma" Sunday's Intimate Talks With Young Girls

The Woman's Job

"MY wife won't let me! It isn't fair for me to enlist, and leave her at home on her own resources!" I heard a young husband make this remark not long ago, and I could not help wondering if the wife to whom he referred backed him up. If she is a real, red-blooded American woman, who is awake to the need of the great struggle in which this country is engaged, I am quite sure that she would say to him, without hesitating:

"You are wrong. You haven't given me the proper credit. I love you—but I love my country more. If it comes to a question which I ought to support, I will say to you, with tears in my eyes, 'Go—and God be with you!' It will be a hard wrench for me, and a bitter sacrifice, and I will shed many tears and pass many sleepless nights, but I will still say with all my heart 'Go.'

"If necessary, I would rather go out into the world and make my own living. If you are willing to risk your life for our country, it is the least I can do to work with my hands for my own bread and butter. And when you come back you will find me waiting for you with outstretched hands to welcome My Hero—who commands respect and has done his duty—and he may find that the girl he has left behind him to battle with the world is a truer wife, and a more purified, and more noble woman than to whom he said goodby. Go—my husband, and may the good Lord bring you back to the woman who will always be praying for your safe return!"

Yes, I know this is what the average wife who thinks at all about the great problem of America would say to her husband—if he put the big question up to her.

But he doesn't put it up to her. He tries to answer it for himself, and in doing so he is giving neither her nor himself justice. Our women of to-day are not the helpless, dependent creatures that their grandmothers were. It is no longer a loss of womanly charm or even of social position for her to make her own living. The world has changed more in the last ten years than in the fifty years before. It recognizes women now as real human beings—not as beautified dolls to charm men. If our women are coming into their own and recognizing this fact for themselves, why can't our men recognize the fact also?

Therefore, when I hear a man saying that the reason he fails to enlist is because his wife at home will have to shift for herself, I cannot help feeling a doubt of that man's patriotism, and perhaps of his honesty. For there was never a real American woman since the days of the Plymouth Fathers, who would not say, even to her best beloved when her country called:

"Go, dear one—I shall pray that the good Lord brings you back to me safe and sound—but the Flag needs you more now than I do!"

Along the Lunch Line

By Jack Callahan